

Maurice Hinchey NEWS

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HINCHEY RE-INTRODUCES LEGISLATION TO PROTECT 9 MILLION ACRES OF UTAH'S WILD LANDS

WASHINGTON – U.S. Rep. Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today re-introduced his legislation to designate more than nine million acres of land in Utah as permanent wilderness. Known as the "America's Red Rock Wilderness Act," the bill would protect some of the nation's most spectacular rockscapes and rare and fragile lands.

"I believe these exceptional sites and the wildlife that inhabit them deserve the protection that permanent wilderness designation would offer," Hinchey said. "The terrain cannot bear much use or development, and the treasures it holds are too rare and special to be exploited."

The "wilderness" designation sought by Hinchey would allow the land to remain in its natural state and would protect it from mining, road and dam construction, and off-road vehicle use. A version of Hinchey's legislation covering a smaller portion of the state was first introduced in 1989 by U.S. Rep. Wayne Owens, who represented Utah in the House until 1992.

Hinchey was quick to point out that all of the land that would be designated wilderness by the bill is federally owned public land, managed by the Interior Department's Bureau of Land Management.

"All of these lands are already owned by all of the people of the United States," Hinchey said. "As those of us who have had a chance to visit this beautiful country already know, the Red Rock Wilderness should be regarded as much a national treasure as the Grand Canyon, the Statue of Liberty or the Bob Marshall Wilderness."

Hinchey's legislation has been endorsed by the Sierra Club, The Wilderness Society, the National Parks and Conservation Association, the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance and numerous other national and local conservation groups. The bill has steadily been gaining Congressional support and was introduced today with 144 cosponsors, the highest number yet at introduction.

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